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Imperial Federation League

OF AUSTRALIA.

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ADDRESSES & PROCEEDINGS, 1910.

No. 1 ANNUAL REPORT

For 1908-09.

MELBOURNE:
Published under the Authority of the League,
May, 1910.

ANNUAL REPORT
for 1908-09.

In submitting the Annual Report for 1909 it should be mentioned that the period actually covered extends from September, 1908, to December, 1909:—

1. The year that has closed proved an active one for the League, and it is gratifying to note that the public is taking an increasing interest in the work. The cordial help which we have received from the Press has done a great deal towards this end, and the League's aims and objects have become more widely known. The general policy of the League is to encourage intellectual interest and sympathy with all matters making for the unity of the Empire, and members are allowed the utmost freedom regarding their convictions.

2. The following addresses were delivered during the period under review:—Imperial Federation and Social Reform, by L. V. Biggs; School Power—an Imperial Necessity, by Frank Tate, M.A., I.S.O.; Some Observations on Imperial Problems, by E. Morris Miller, M.A.; Military Training for Schoolboys, by Colonel T. Brodribb, M.A.; Canada and the Empire, by J. Castell Hopkins (of Toronto); and Imperial Federation—the Educational Factor, by J. W. Barrett, M.D.

3. During the year banquets were given in honour of Sir Charles Lucas, K.C.M.G., and Colonel J. F. G. Foxton, C.M.G., M.P.

4. At the Imperial Conference of 1907 the representatives from the Dominions pressed upon the Government of the United Kingdom the importance and advantage of allowing officers of the Colonial Office to come into direct contact with the larger self-governing States. The suggestion was accepted, and, after the re-arrangement of the office under Lord Elgin, Sir Charles Lucas (the head of the newly-formed Dominions Department) was deputed to visit the Commonwealth and New Zealand. The significance of this visit was recognised by the League, and Sir Charles Lucas, along with Mr. A. A. Pearson, C.M.G., was tendered a banquet at the Grand Hotel. The proceedings

were published in the Addresses, Nos. 3-4. Both gentlemen in feeling terms thanked the League for the kindness extended to them.

5. In March last year the whole Empire was roused to the serious condition of affairs in regard to naval defence, owing to certain statements made by Messrs. Asquith and McKenna in the House of Commons. The people of the Commonwealth readily supported the movement to immediately strengthen the Imperial Navy as a matter of urgency, and the League whole-heartedly joined with other bodies in consummating the wishes of the general public. At the large enthusiastic meeting in the Town Hall, presided over by the Lord Mayor, almost all the speakers were members of the League, our chief representatives being Senator Sir Robert Best and Dr. Carty Salmon, M.P.

6. The League held a special meeting for its own members, at which the following resolutions were unanimously carried:—

1. That this League emphasises the need for all parts of the Empire to co-operate earnestly and ungrudgingly in the maintenance of our supremacy at sea, and views with pleasure the present awakening of all the nations under the Crown to their responsibilities as regards the naval defence of the Empire.

2. That this League affirms that the gift of a Dreadnought to the Imperial Navy by the Commonwealth, under the present circumstances, would uphold the solidarity of the Empire, and assure Australia a more commanding position regarding foreign relations; and that at the same time it would in no way diminish any aspirations for an Australian navy under Australian control.

7. In June the Commonwealth's Dreadnought was offered to the British Government, and gratefully accepted. We note that a strong movement is on foot in Canada to follow Australia's lead, the grounds being that the matter is one of urgency, whereas the building of a Canadian Navy must of necessity require considerable time for its accomplishment. At all events, the new departure by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in his advocacy of a Canadian Navy, which was supported by Mr. R. L. Borden, the Opposition leader, was instrumental, along with the movement in Australia, in influencing Mr. Asquith, as President of the Imperial Conference, to summon a subsidiary conference to deal with the naval and military defence of the Empire. Australia was ably represented by Colonel J. F. G. Foxton, C.M.G. The conference was characterised by a strong feeling of unanimity, and new naval agreements were

made whereby Canada and Australia were to build and man (as far as possible) and control their own fleets units, and a scheme was planned for joint action with the Admiralty both in peace and war. New Zealand adhered to the subsidy principle, and South Africa reserved judgment until the Union was inaugurated. Colonel Foxton, who was ably supported by Colonel Bridges and Captain Creswell, was entertained by the League on his return to the Commonwealth.

8. In addition to the Defence Conference the year was made memorable by the gathering in London of press representatives from all parts of the Empire. The Imperial Press Conference, which has now become a permanent institution, was held in the midst of the naval crisis, and the remarkable utterances of leading statesmen on Imperial affairs, combined with their unanimity of feeling, stirred the delegates, and stimulated them to strengthen the Imperial tone in the press throughout the Empire. Already a slight cheapening of cable rates has resulted from their discussions, and it is hoped that the endeavor to bring the Canadian press into a more direct line with London will be speedily successful. Two events of importance to Australia might be mentioned, the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in Sydney, and the visit of Viscount Kitchener. It is gratifying to note that the inter-Imperial relations of commerce and defence have thus been markedly emphasised in our midst.

9. During the year the League sent invitations to the Earl of Rosebery, Earl of Crewe, Viscount Milner, and Mr. Walter H. Long, M.P., inviting them to visit Australia in the interests of Imperial union and co-operation. Owing to the serious position of British politics at the time, these gentlemen were unable to accept the League's invitation for the present. But the League will warmly welcome any gentlemen from the United Kingdom, who visit the Commonwealth with a view to strengthening the ties of Empire.

10. On July 8 the League sent its greetings to Mr. Chamberlain on the occasion of his 73rd birthday.

11. The League appointed a sub-committee to confer with the Victoria League of Victoria in order to stimulate interest in naval matters amongst Australians. The committee drafted a scheme for joint action, which was published in the League notes printed with Publication No. 5, and it is hoped that something tangible may be done during the coming year. We view with satisfaction the advance the A.N.A. are also making in this direction, and we

shall cordially co-operate with that body in the formation of Navy Leagues, with national and imperial objectives.

12. A resolution was sent to Sir J. H. Villiers, chairman of the South Africa National Convention, congratulating the people of South Africa on the fulfilment of their hopes, and wishing God-speed to the new Union under the Crown.

13. The League has entered into co-operation with the following Leagues in other parts of the Empire :—United Kingdom,—British Empire League, Compatriots' Club, and Imperial Co-operation League; Canada,—British Empire League, and Empire Club, Toronto.

14. We regret to announce the deaths of the following members during the period under review :—Mr. W. J. Bradshaw, the Hon. C. J. Ham, and Messrs. R. J. Larking and H. D'Esterre Taylor. These gentlemen had been associated with the League almost from its commencement, and had rendered valuable service to the cause of British Imperialism in our midst.

15. Mr. D'Esterre Taylor, who died last May, became hon. secretary of the League in 1892, and held office until 1907, when he was compelled to resign owing to ill-health. The League took an active interest in the early stages of the Federal movement in Australia, and Mr. Taylor was its delegate to the historical conference at Corowa, where he shared with Sir John Quick the honour of suggesting that the pathway towards union might best be secured through the means of a popularly elected convention and a referendum. Both in the press and on the platform Mr. Taylor rendered eminent services to the Imperial cause in Australia, and he contributed several articles to "Imperial Federation." In 1900 he advanced a scheme for universal military training in Australia, which showed his foresight as regards the demands of a truly federal defence policy. Our late secretary was one of those patriots whose devotion to his country possessed for him the sanction of a religion, and he toiled with his whole soul to realise the objects of the cause that was so dear to his heart. He held to the faith in days of neglect and gloom" ("Argus") and the present flourishing condition of the League is in no small measure due to his disinterested efforts.

16. During the current year we hope to extend the work of the League, and institute occasional luncheons for the entertainment of oversea visitors, as is customary in Canada. These luncheons, which interfere so little with the duties of business men, are becoming quite popular among

similar bodies in London, such as the Imperial Co-operation League, the Royal Colonial Institute, etc.

17. We would also remind members that the next Imperial Conference is expected to take place next year, and we look forward to having a series of papers read dealing with the various aspects of the conference with a view to stimulating more interest throughout the Commonwealth in its work and significance to Australia.

18. A new set of rules has been drafted by the executive committee, and they are printed with the report with a view to their adoption at a future general meeting.

19. We desire to place on record our appreciation of the splendid services which the "Standard of Empire" is rendering to the cause of Imperial Co-operation, and we also express our thanks to the editor for inserting notices of our work from time to time. The "Scotsman" has made several references to our meetings and addresses, and we would thank the editors for thus making known our work throughout Scotland. We cannot overlook to mention the assistance which the Melbourne press have rendered us throughout the past year. We also appreciate the kindness of the British Empire League in publishing in their Review the addresses delivered by Lieutenant L. H. Hordern and Mr. Rivers Langton.

20. The League is now entering on the 25th year of its existence, having been founded in 1885, with the late Mr. G. Downes Carter as its first president, and a record of its work may be issued to members during the year. There has been a gratifying increase in the number of members, but the services which the League is now carrying out have so enlarged that an augmented membership is an immediate necessity. We make it a matter of policy to distribute our publications throughout the other portions of Empire, and as this work requires funds for its continuance, we trust members will readily respond to these increased demands, and add considerably to our numbers.

E. MORRIS MILLER, }
A. F. GIBSON, } Hon Secretaries.

March 10, 1910.

RULES

OF THE

Imperial Federation League of Australia.

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1. The name of the League shall be The Imperial Federation League of Australia.

2. The object of the League shall be the maintenance of a United Empire, and the development of constructive principles, securing the permanent co-operation of the United Kingdom and all the Dominions. Towards this end the League shall hold meetings, and its proceedings and addresses may be published. The League being non-partisan, members shall be permitted the utmost freedom in all discussions, and the League shall not be responsible for the opinions of individual members.

3. The League shall consist of a general council and ordinary members. The executive committee shall consist of the president, vice-presidents (not more than seven), hon. treasurer, two hon. secretaries, and a committee of not more than 15 members.

4. The executive committee shall undertake the control and direction of the work of the League, with the assistance of the general council, which shall be called together at least twice a year.

5. The annual general meeting of the League shall be held in March. The election of office-bearers and committee shall then take place, and the annual report and balance sheet be presented.

6. The League shall meet, as far as possible, each month, excepting January and February.

7. Members may fix the amount of their own subscription.

8. All members shall receive the League's publications.

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Imperial Federation League

OF AUSTRALIA.

PRESIDENT :

THE HON. ALFRED DEAKIN, M.P.

VICE-PRESIDENTS :

SENATOR THE HON. SIR ROBERT BEST, K.C.M.G.
THE HON. C. CARTY SALMON, M.P.
THE HON. DONALD MACKINNON, M.L.A.
ALDERMAN SIR ARTHUR SNOWDEN, K.B.
J. M. GILLESPIE, ESQ.

HON. TREASURER :

LIEUT.-COL. T. BRODRIBB, "Hallatrow," Kew.

HON. SECRETARIES :

E. MORRIS MILLER, M.A., Public Library, Melbourne.
A. F. GIBSON, Royal Yacht Club, St. Kilda.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

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